

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. Of these, claims 1-13 are presently under consideration based on an election that was filed on January 13, 2006 with traverse. Claims 14-22 are withdrawn.

In the Office Action dated September 20, 2006, the claims were objected to based on an informality related to claim numbering. Applicant apologizes for this clerical error. The mis-numbered claims were renumbered in the Office Action. To avoid confusion and maintain consistency with the Office Action, Applicant will refer to the claims based on their revised numbering, as was done in the Office Action.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, and 9-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,984,245 ("McGahan et al.") in view of U.S. Published Application No. 2004/0133279 ("Krueger et al."). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McGahan et al. in view of Krueger et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,371,988 ("Pafford et al."). The Office Action indicated that claims 2, 8 and 13 contain allowable subject matter.

The September 20, 2006 Office Action has been carefully considered. In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that the objections and rejections to the claims are traversed, and the application is in form for allowance.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully appreciates the Examiner's identification of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 8 and 13. To expedite prosecution, Applicant has elected to amend independent claim 1 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 2, and to amend independent claim 7 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 8. These amendments are believed to place all claims in condition for allowance.

Claim 13 was further amended to replace the word "gauges" with "gauge", the former being a typographical error. This amendment is related to form, not patentability, and is not intended to surrender any subject matter.

Claim Objection

The Examiner has renumbered the claims in the Office Action, which Applicant gratefully appreciates. Applicant will assume that the revised claim numbering is now entered, and that the claim objection has been resolved. Applicant has not submitted amendments to revise the numbering, to avoid any possible confusion or conflict with the requirement to preserve original claim numbering under 37 C.F.R. § 1.126.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 1 was amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 2, and claim 7 was amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 8. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 7 are now in form for allowance.

Claims 2-6 are dependent on amended claim 1 and incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in claim 1. Similarly, claims 8-13 are dependent on amended claim 7 and incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in claim 7. Therefore, claims 2-6 and 8-13 are believed to be in allowable form.

To differentiate claims 2 and 8 from their respective base claims as amended, Applicant has amended claims 2 and 8 to further recite an arrow head. Support for these amendments is provided in sections of the original specification, including but not limited to page 5, lines 6-14. No new matter has been added.

Cancelled Claims

Claims 14-22 have been cancelled without prejudice, as they represent the non-elected claims. The cancellations are done with the intent of placing the application in form for allowance, and are not in response to any rejections. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 14-22 in a subsequent application.

Conclusions

Independent claims 1 and 7 have been amended to incorporate subject matter that was deemed allowable in the Office Action. The remaining claims are dependent claims based on either claim 1 or claim 7. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully believes that the application is in form for immediate allowance.

Appln. No.: 10/783,430
Amendment Dated December 20, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 20, 2006

BBM-135US

If the Examiner believes that any issues remain which prevent allowance of the application at this time, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at 610-407-0700.

Respectfully submitted,



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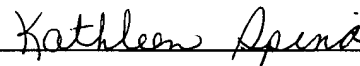
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Dated: December 20, 2006

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